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A83B4 Last May when President Carter sent his environment message to Congress,
he said:

"Americans long thought that nature could take care of itself -- or that if it did not, the consequences were someone else's problem. As we know now, that assumption was wrong. None of us is a stranger to environmental problems."

President Carter sent an environment program to Congress that was the broadest ever produced by a President.

He also sent a signal that was very clear:

The time has come for this Nation to start doing some of the things about our environment that people have been talking about doing for years.

The time has come to change.

Change is hard. And the longer anything is continued, the harder it is to change.

But it must come. It always does.

There is a saying that there is nothing permanent except change.

And I believe in it.

That does not mean that we must give up the things we believe in, the things that are important to us.

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Remarks by Secretary of Agriculture Bob Bergland to Meeting of National Agricultural Chemicals Association at The Greenbrier, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, Tuesday, September 27, 1977 at 10:15 a.m.

But it does mean that there will be times when the flow of events requires us to adapt to changing situations, when we must amend a position but not necessarily abdicate it.

We are in such a time now.

Since World War II, American agriculture has been revolutionized by chemical technology.

The normally bountiful U.S. farm has been made even more bountiful by use of hundreds of chemicals to increase productivity, protect crops, and cut labor needs.

This use has grown to such a point that now we release into the environment each year more than one billion pounds of pesticides.

With almost every technological boon that has come to us in those 30 years since World War II, we have been brought a mixture of good and bad.

Television is a communications marvel to behold, but it is turning a generation of our young into people who cannot read.

Jets carry us from here to there in a fraction of the time it used to take, but their sound has put an additional stress on the lives of many of our urban citizens.

Autos have given us a mobility we used to long for, but they have helped make the air in some of our cities unhealthy.

Pesticides are no exception.

When they began being used heavily, we did not give enough thought to the eventual consequences to the environment and to people. Their side effects and their long-term impact were often unknown or ignored.

But over the years we have learned that there are dangers. Sometimes our learning has been painful.

Now, we must adjust.

The producers and users of chemicals must adjust, and the Department of Agriculture must adjust.

Like all change, it will be difficult. But it will be less difficult if it is done in the same manner that has long characterized relations between your organization and USDA -- working together.

It is obvious to me that you know your responsibilities and are working on them.

Your leadership has shown that it is willing and interested in having your organization reflect the changing times and I commend them -- and you -- for that.

The stated policy of the National Agricultural Chemicals Association is to "endorse and urge support of programs which have as their ultimate objectives the achievement of pest suppression based on sound ecological principles that integrate chemical, biological and cultural methods into a practical program, where necessary and when possible."

We cannot ask for much more than that.

You have offered your guidance and comments as our Pest Management Work Group has prepared its draft on integrated pest management, and you have our appreciation for that.

The responsibility, then, for doing what needs to be done lies with us at USDA.

We intend to do our job, too.

I would not try to tell you that integrated pest management is some kind of miracle discovery that is going to solve all of these problems. Or that it will, as some often give the impression, eliminate the use of pesticides.

It is instead an idea that has been with us, but whose time now clearly has come.

It is obvious that chemicals are essential to agricultural production.

The crucial problem is how to get farmers to use these chemicals with the least adverse impact on the environment.

This is the area where USDA must provide leadership.

As you know, the draft worked out by our Pest Management Work Group calls for us to do it in four ways:

1. Conduct and support cooperative research to assure the development and use of resistant crops and livestock, biological agents, cultural methods, and selective biological and chemical pesticides.

2. Conduct projects and programs which demonstrate and implement feasible pest management technologies under practical conditions.

3. Strengthen the coordination between all agencies of the department involved in the management of pest problems and with other federal, state and private organizations to develop and secure the use of effective and practical pest management systems.

4. Provide opportunities for interested parties for input into the development, implementation and review and adjustment of the department pest management programs.

By the time a final report on integrated pest management is finished next month, we should have a clear outline of where we are going.

Whatever the final details, the program will -- as the draft statement said -- "give special emphasis to the development and use of alternative tactics in integrated pest management systems."

We at USDA have a special responsibility in the effort to answer the concerns of the President -- and those of the American people, for it is their worries he is reflecting.

For two reasons.

One, we oversee more than 187.6 million acres of federal forests and 350 million acres of cropland. And both are major users of pesticides.

Second, we have a continuing concern for the health, well-being and safety of those so-called "non-target species" that must be protected from the potentially harmful pesticide residues.

For years we have not offered American farmers much of an alternative to the technique of applying pesticides to crops at set intervals, whether the crops needed it or not. And the American farmer, in his drive to produce more for a world that almost always wants more, knows a good thing when he sees it.

Now we must offer the alternatives.

And we must show the American farmer that they work and are economically sound.

Even if we did not feel that the time has come for us to do something about our fear that there has been too much of a good thing, there are other reasons for putting less emphasis on pesticides, and more on natural biological controls.

* As you know, some crop insects have begun to build up resistance to chemicals.

* The cost of pesticides and their application has risen sharply in the past 10 years.

* Also, we've got to start being more realistic in these energy-short times about use of oil and petroleum-based products.

* And, finally, there appears to be an opportunity to help ease this nation's unemployment by using "people power" instead of only chemicals in our fight against pests.

It would also appear to be an opportunity for an industry that has shown in the past that it can more than meet the needs of the American farmer by coming up with new ideas, new materials, to show that it can adjust profitably

to those needs in a changing era.

President Carter said something else in his environmental message.

He said:

"I believe environmental protection is consistent with a sound economy. Previous pollution control laws have generated many more jobs than they have cost.

"And other environmental measures whose time has come -- measures like energy conservation, reclamation of stripmined lands, and rehabilitation of our cities -- will produce still more new jobs, often where they are needed most.

"In any event, if we ignore the care of our environment, the day will eventually come when our economy suffers for that neglect."

If we didn't already have good reasons for doing what we're doing, that would give us another one.

Thank you.

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